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28 May 1954 ~~SECRET~~ 003

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR:

Recommend:

- (1) Our library have a research-analyst study all by-line stories by Sydney Gruson in the NEW YORK TIMES during the past year to develop "pro" or "anti" pattern of any nature.
- (2) Our representative in San Salvador determine without objective being known what Marshall Bannell, of NBC, Reuters, New York HERALD TRIBUNE, etc., (a stringer) thinks of Gruson, his views, etc. Bannell was expelled at the same time as Gruson but was not re-admitted to Guatemala.
- (3) Similar to (2) but get information from Jules du Bois, of Guatemala City, a CHICAGO TRIBUNE Latin American correspondent, who was seriously beaten in Guatemala by a gang of Reds, allegedly for his "anti-regime" stories.
- (4) ~~C~~] determine what is known there of Gruson and his activities since he is permanently based there for the NEW YORK TIMES.

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STANLEY J. GROGAN

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

2003

GUATEMALA REDS INCREASE POWERS

They Are Still in Minority in Congress, but Membership and Influence Grow

By SYDNEY GRUSON

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

GUATEMALA, Nov. 5—The emergence of the Communists to a position of dominance in Guatemala has continued during the past six months. It is evident that from the United States point of view the situation here will go on getting worse. Recent developments have been along two lines. On the one hand they have shown an actual growth in Communist influence and on the other they have brought the Communists into far more open admission than ever before of their real position.

Nobody knows the exact number of members of the Communist party but at a recent organization meeting it was announced that the party's membership had doubled since last year. Charges by other segments of the country's political life that the Communists have been infiltrating rural agricultural boards in great strength reflect the Communists ability to muster enough supporters for the jobs they have available.

Still Minority in Congress

In Congress the Communists still have only four seats out of a total of fifty-six. The two major parties in the Government coalition along with the Communists are the Partido Accion Revolucionaria with twenty-two seats and the Partido de la Revolucion Guatemalteca with sixteen seats.

Non-Communist members of the Government of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman have long pointed to these figures as proof that the Communists have only a minor role in a regime composed primarily of leftist but non-Communist national parties.

Recent events within the two larger parties have stripped the facade from this pretense. There was a brief reaction of shock when Francisco Fernandez Foncea, secretary general of the Partido Accion Revolucionaria, stood up in Congress last month and said that the Communists were the only true revolutionaries for whom the other parties would have to give way in time.

Señor Fernandez was removed as secretary general because of his indiscretion. But it is significant that he was replaced by Julio Estrada de la Hoz, who is considered to be even closer to the Communists and that no one within either of the two major parties has quarreled with the ideological premise Señor Fernandez Foncea expounded.

Support Embarrassed Communists

In fact there was such a rush to get on Señor Fernandez Foncea's ideological bandwagon that the Communists were embarrassed into declaring that this was not what they wanted at all. They emphasized that this was an internal affair of the Partido Accion Revolucionaria and that it should be healed swiftly to allow the "national democratic front" to push forward with the work of land reform and the winning of economic independence from the United States.

Within the Partido de la Revolucion Guatemalteca—the so-called Socialist party of Guatemala—there was a rebellion by six deputies who bolted the party rather, they said, than accept party discipline aimed at rubber-stamping Communist programs and slogans. But none of the six has come forward with an independent non-Communist program and the general belief is that the rebellion was concerned primarily with internal patronage affairs and did not stem from ideological opposition to the Communists.

There was another significant development in connection with application of the land reform law. The development fitted another piece into the slowly developing picture of complete Communist authority in Guatemala.

Communists Always Win

As the result of an armed clash between two groups of Indian farm workers at the village of Yepocapa some members of the Partido de la Revolucion Guatemalteca and some officials of the Confederation of Agricultural Workers charged that the Communists were applying the land reform in a "sectarian" manner. It had been generally known that the Communists were packing local committees and administering the law so as to be able to reward their own people with land and to insure their position in the countryside.

The issue was settled in favor of the Communists, leading the newspaper, El Imparcial to com-

ment editorially that whenever there was friction between any of the revolutionary parties the conflict always was resolved in favor of the Communists aided by a "powerful invisible hand."

"What superior design safeguards the Communist party and is speeding the fatal process announced by Fernandez Foncea?" the editorial asked. "Perhaps it won't be long before the facts themselves remove the veil."

Attempting to answer this question an observer is forced to the conclusion that President Arbenz Guzman has become a prisoner of the embrace he so long ago gave the Communists.

Gruson was expelled for this article.